**Assessment for Learning and Whole College Marking Policy**

**Aim**

To establish a consistent approach to the way the learner’s work is marked, so that students feel valued and have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. To ensure all students have their work marked regularly to help them reach or exceed their full potential. Marking will help students to improve their work and will inform teacher planning and monitoring.

**Rationale**

‘Assessment for Learning (AfL) is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by students and their teachers, to decide where students are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.’ (See Assessment For Learning Policy)  
J Rowe 2007

At Unity College we recognize that teachers’ marking of students’ progress and attainment and students’ assessment of their own progress and attainment are central functions in the learning process. The focus of written feedback is on helping students gain a clear understanding of how well they have gained knowledge, concepts and skills.

Marking is most effective when the student knows:

* The purpose of the task
* How far they have achieved this
* How to move closer towards their goal of learning

Marking and implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teachers.

**Presentation**

**Teachers must ensure that work is presented to the highest possible standard at all times, excluding rough and draft work.**

* Teachers must not allow students to deface books, folders and planners
* Students should write in pen for all written exercises and use pencil for all drawing activities
* All written work must have titles underlined, a date (Monday 6 February and not 6/2/06)
* When completing ICT based work, presentation remains very important and should be carefully checked for grammar and spelling errors.
* Computers should not be used just to make work look better. Use of ICT should introduce or further develop key skills in ICT.

**The Marking Process**

Marking must provide detailed and personalised evaluation points for future developments (Ofsted: Good Assessment in Secondary Schools)

**Written Feedback should:**

* Be diagnostic
* Be predominately encouraging and constructive
* Be personal and address student by their chosen name
* Relate to lesson objectives and learning outcomes
* Give positive feedback, positive in tone and accessible by all students
* Challenge the students to think for themselves
* Be focused on student learning
* Be supportive of achievement in all its forms
* Help students to improve their work
* Promote learner confidence
* Include opportunities to develop peer and self assessment skills
* Inform future planning and thereby support individual ‘target setting’

**Marking**

* Must be regular, kept up-to-date, and promptly returned to students (within 3 weeks).
* Students need to understand marking systems, both the criteria for marking as well as the comments and grades or marks awarded.
* Each subject must have a marking policy and should determine the frequency of marking of regular tasks.
* Departments should have a common approach to marking English, particularly spelling in all subjects (marking for literacy).
* Important and significant errors should be corrected.
* Practical, project-based subjects need to have regular marking, even if a whole project may extend over a period of time.
* Marks should be recorded.
* Only put marks and grades on work if it is judged that these will motivate and encourage students. Just grading students’ work can have a negative impact on student learning and motivation.
* Marking should be linked to the college’s Vivo reward system.

**Assessment**

* Formative comments will be given that show what has been done well and what still needs improvement and shows students how to improve their performance and move them on in their learning.
* Over the course of a term when marked work is returned to a class, time should be set aside to allow each student to respond to the teacher’s comments and improve their understanding. Encourage a dialogue between teacher and student.
* Students’ work for external examinations should be marked using the marking criteria of the examinations.
* Internal moderation and standardisation may be needed to produce consistent standards between different teachers.

**Frequency of Book Marking**

The type and extent of written feedback will vary from subject to subject. Wherever possible, this should take place three times per half-term (every 3 weeks?).

**Target Level**

All books or folders should have the grading/assessment criteria and the student’s target level or grade clearly written on the front inside cover.

**How the books should be marked**

At the end of each section of work that is marked, teachers need to give:

* A level or grade (depending on the key stage). At KS3 this should include a sub-level.
* Two strengths of the piece of work. Marking should be as encouraging and positive as possible.
* One improvement that could be used to raise attainment.
* Staff must follow the ‘marking for literacy’ policy.

**Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

Standard codes should be used across all subject areas. (Literacy across the curriculum).

**Unity College Marking Annotations**

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| **Annotations in Margin** | **Annotations in body of text** | **Comments** |
| **Sp** | “It was not necessary” | Spelling errors should be underlined and “Sp” written in the margin |
| **Sp x 3** | “The environment is very important…” | High frequency words in the subject that are spelt incorrectly should be underlined and “Sp” written in the margin. The word should be copied out the number of times indicated.  (NB: If work is **full** of spelling errors, it might be appropriate not to obliterate the work with red pen corrections for each one as this can de-motivate the student at first sight.) |
| **//** | “James walked to his friend’s house.//Later that day….” | Indicates that a new paragraph is needed and where is should be in the text. |
| **WW** | “There were 5 students in the lesson. Mr Jones learned them some new geog case studies….” | Indicates inappropriate or wrong choice of words eg slang, use of written text or abbreviations where unnecessary. |
| **C** | “mrs Smith loved Manchester” | Indicates that a capital letter is needed or used in the wrong place. |
| **X** | **X** in me maths assessment I got nowt **X** | Indicates that the work between crosses needs to be rewritten. |
| **♈** | “In my pencil case I ♈ got a pencil” | Word or letter missed out. |

All subject teachers should be consistent in the use of the above annotations when marking work. This is so that students at Unity College will recognize the annotations across subject areas and will understand their meaning.

**Recording**

Evidence of attainment needs to be retained in order to support judgments made and to inform future planning and learning. Formative records should be accessible to both staff and parents of students.

All students are entitled to their own formative record of attainment, which reflects their achievements, both within and beyond school and should include achievements identified by the student. These records will naturally be reflected in the reporting process.

Teachers must keep sufficient written records to enable them to make professional judgments about the attendance, attainment and progress of their students. This information must be available to share with others if required. Teachers are expected to make use of the Unity College Staff Planner although many teachers will also record data electronically.

**Reporting**

**Regular reporting of students’ achievements is both a right of individual students and parents and a statutory obligation.**

* There are three reporting cycles each academic year for each year group. Each of these will result in a snapshot report of a student’s achievement, effort, attendance and progress.
* Teachers must provide a current attainment level/grade for their students and a formative statement or target. (The reports will also allow staff to input grades for effort, homework, relationships with staff etc)
* It is essential that all staff meet the published deadlines for inputting their data as failure to do so will result in a whole cohort’s reports being delayed.
* Reports are issued to parents to coincide with Parents’ Evenings, Mock Exams and Options so that students, parents and teachers can have informed conversations about raising achievement.
* Each year group will have a Parent’s Evening. In addition to this, each report will remind parents that they can contact the school at any time if they wish to arrange a meeting with a teacher.
* Each report will include a short comment from the student’s PD tutor. This should be motivational and take a holistic view on the student’s achievement across the board as well as commenting on their attitude and contribution to the PD group.

**Legislation**

This policy reflects the statutory reporting and assessment arrangements contained within The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000 No 297), the Data Protection Act 1998 and The Data Protection (Subject Access Modification) (Education) Order 2000 (SI 2000 No 414) and the monitoring duties laid upon schools by the Race Relations (Amended) 2000 Act.

In essence, the reporting regulations stipulate that the minimum is an annual report, whichmust provide information on:

* The student’s general progress
* The student’s progress in all subjects and activities studied
* The student’s attendance record
* Arrangements for parents, or the student if over 18, to discuss the report with a teacher at the school.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

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| **Role** | **Responsibility** |
| **Teacher** | Ensure work is marked at least three times per half-term.  Award students a level or grade for the section of work in their books.  Advise students on how to improve the level or grade for the section of work in their books.  Ensure that students have the target level or grade clearly on display on the front inside cover of their exercise book or folder.  Ensure that students are provided with time to consider marking comments. (See Assessment For Learning Policy).  To share good practice with book marking in meetings. (show and tell). |
| **Head of Subject** | To produce a subject marking policy that reflects the whole college marking policy.  Heads of Subject to check marking of books on a regular basis.(Work Scrutiny)  Ensure the subject has a coherent and consistent approach to identifying learning milestones and identify key tasks to be marked in detail.  Subject marking is planned over an extended period of time so that a clear evaluation of a student’s strengths and weaknesses can be given.  Planned opportunities are created each term to moderate key assessment activities to ensure consistency and that assessment information is entered inline with the data calendar deadlines.  Level and grade descriptors are provided to be stuck in the front of exercise books.  To ensure that assessment is coherent and in accordance with this Assessment Policy through the normal discussions involved in line management. |
| **Teaching Assistants** | To read through the comments written by teachers in order to guide any students they are working with in the class. |
| **Leadership Team** | Devise and implement a programme to monitor the implementation of the Whole College Marking Policy/Assessment for Learning Policy/Assessment of Learning Policy.  Carry out work scrutiny as part of Subject Monitoring Reviews. |
| **Students** | Under guidance from teachers, sometimes mark their own or another student’s book.  Read comments by teachers.  Respond positively to comments written by teachers.  When advised, self-assess work using criteria.  Put the best effort into book work.  Catch up on work after absence.  Keep high standards of presentation in book work. |
| **Parents** | To read through the comments written by teachers regularly.  To support the school in checking that students are organising their book work. |
| **Governors** | To be aware of the Marking Policy/ Assessment for Learning Policy/Assessment of Learning Policy.  To listen to feedback on the implementation of the new policy.  On visits to college, Governors are able to sample work. |

**How students are leveled or graded**

**Key Stage 3**

A National Curriculum level and sub-level

**Key Stage 4**

GCSE grades recorded in line with the exam board marking criteria.

**Modeling –** before starting a task, student find it helpful to see what a finished and assessed product/piece of work might look like. It can generate discussion about what makes a good piece of work and how examples might be improved.

**Learning Milestones –** not all marking can or should be marked in detail. Within each unit of work subjects will identify a finite number of key pieces of work for more in depth, quality marking.

* A minimum of **six** such pieces will be identified by foundation subjects over the course of a year, though core subjects would probably need to identify additional opportunities for quality marking to take place.
* These pieces of work will focus on the assessment of progress in relation to specific learning objectives or if required curricular target/s.
* Success criteria will be shared with students and at the end of the marking process it should be clear to the student “what they have done well” and “what they need to do to improve.”
* Comments will be positive and subject specific. Linking words such as BUT are best avoided. “**Even better if….” (EBI),** may be a more helpful way of focusing teacher and student feedback.
* An interim KS level or grade will be awarded and students will be given the opportunity to improve their work.

Where a teacher has written “finish this” or “colour in please” or made other such requests then **the student must respond to this by initialing the request and following the instruction** before the books are next collected to be marked.

**Light touch/”tick and flick” marking –** in order to support the giving of quality feedback at key points in the learning process, other work should be marked in less detail. Light touch marking will develop the skills of peer and self assessment, and will stand alongside whole class and teacher led marking of more closed tasks, class notes and exercises. Teachers will acknowledge such work variously through oral feedback as well as the use of an **effort grade**, ticks, simple marks (10/10), stickers, initials, and/or brief attainment based comments.

**Formative marking –** both the marking of milestone pieces and light touch marking are examples of formative marking. They inform the teacher and student of learning progress, identify the next steps and how they can best be taken. It informs teacher planning. This type of work/marking is distinct from end of unit assessments which are summative, judging student attainment and therefore progress made at a given point in time.

**Attainment –** grades aren’t always necessary. They can, for example, be meaningless given the size/nature of the task, and distract from improvement comments. Grades can undermine confidence in some students and result in complacency for others.

However, it is still important for teachers, parents and students to know periodically how well the learning is going **and**  what still need to be done. Students need to be clear about what they need to do to progress from one level/grade to the next, and equally should be clear about the expected progress they should be making through the key stage.

In order to support this process:

* Levels and grades should be ‘translated’ into student speak and shared with students.
* Key pieces of work or learning milestones will be awarded an attainment grade expressed in terms of an interim KS level or grade.
* At the end of a unit a formal assessment will take place and a KS level or grade will be awarded.

**Effort –** students of all ages and abilities say they like to see effort acknowledged. Effort, though crucial for learning success, is distinct from attainment levels and is personal to the individual. Effort should be acknowledged by the awarding of an effort grade in line with whole college policy, descending from A at the top end of the scale to D at the bottom.

**Quality Control –** in order to ensure the consistent application of standards and to support the sharing of good practice, departments will sample (eg a top, middle, bottom) milestones pieces and end of unit assessments for moderation. Time for this will be agreed by departments and may include department meetings, cluster meetings, Learning Review days or by accessing the directed time budget. Examples of standardized work should be retained and shared with students as part of the learning process, and can form part of the department’s marking evidence base for Ofsted.

**Colour of ink –** having spoken to students there appears to be no concern about the use of red ink for marking. Students, instead, expressed concern about over detailed marking which was seen as discouraging and ‘spoilt’ presentation. RED ink or one that contrasts with that used by the student is therefore recommended.

**Effort Grades**

**Recording**

Marks must be recorded on individual pieces of graphical/written work.

All marks should be recorded in teachers’ planners

In addition to the requirements from examination boards/DfES etc, marks for external bodies will be recorded on the School Information management System (SIMS).

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